I. Introduction: What to Read and How to Read It

In their Introduction to the volume, Resource Books for Teachers: Literature, Alan Duff and Alan Maley argue that literary texts are “unlike many other forms of language teaching inputs, which frequently trivialize experience in the service of pedagogy,” and furthermore, that the “‘genuine feel’ of literary texts is a powerful motivator, especially when allied with the fact that literary texts so often touch on themes to which learners can bring a personal response from their own experience” (6).

As far as literary texts are concerned, certain of the works of Ernest Hemingway would seem to be especially appropriate for English language teaching. First of all, in terms of the various factors cited by Maley and Duff as influencing the degree of “difficulty” of a text, including linguistic difficulty (syntactic complexity, lexical density, discoursal organization), text length, difficulties of range of reference, and acceptance problems, the Hemingway works that have been most highly valued by critics are also those which can be deemed the least “difficult.” Second, many of Hemingway’s works contain “epistemological puzzles” in which the reader
is invited to “read between the lines” of a story and supply a key word, correct a character’s false interpretation, or re-evaluate a stereotyped idea. This process is different from attempting to discern authorial intention, in that it unites the implied author (not the “author”) in a process of “secret sharing.”

Before proceeding to a discussion of Hemingway’s particular writing style, however, it is necessary to stipulate how his works should be read, and which works among his large literary output are most suitable as language teaching material. The traditional hermeneutic approach, in which meaning, in the form of the author’s intent, resides in the text, as Terry Eagleton once quipped, “like a plum in a Christmas pie,” is especially confusing when dealing with a reading situation in which author and readers hold significantly different cultural assumptions. Likewise, the reader response approach, in which readers are free to make any meaning they wish from the words of a text, is also not very helpful in a language-teaching situation, since there are few mechanisms by which reading competence can be discussed. At the same time, approaches such as that advocated by the New Critics, in which so-called extra-textual meanings are bracketed or put aside in order to concentrate on “textual” meaning, have been convincingly shown by the poststructuralists to be unworkable. More specifically, in the case of Hemingway’s writing, the details of the author’s life are such a well-known and hotly-contested arena that critics have argued that they must necessarily be included in any reading of the Hemingway “text” (Raeburn; Comley and Scholes, xi-xii; Moddelmog, 35-57). Also, Hemingway’s “mythical” status has long served as a draw to readers of various nationalities, and can function to overcome what Duff and Maley call “acceptance difficulties” with a text (8).

A semiotic approach, on the other hand, because it situates a given text within an infinitely-stretching network of codes, including other texts, biographical details, and cultural objects, allows students to bring whatever
information they might have acquired to bear on their reading of a given text. At the same time, because it looks within the text for generic or discursive structures that enable and constrain meaning, a semiotic approach does not allow just any interpretation. For these reasons, I believe that a semiotic approach is the most pedagogically useful way of reading literary texts in a language-teaching situation.

One of the fundamental analytic tools used by semioticians is the distinction between histoire ("story") and discours ("discourse"). In his famous essay, "The Correlations of Tense in the French Verb," Emile Beneviste divided texts into "story," distinguished by the fact that it is written in the passé simple (in those languages in which that tense exists), and expresses itself in the language of the referential, of documentation, "he" and "she" – and discourse, which is characterized by use of the present tense, and employs the rhetorical, conversational "I," "you," "me" and "thou." Robert Scholes notes that in many of his works, Hemingway seems to have "made a strong effort to eliminate discourse altogether" (34). For the sake of convenience, I will refer to those of Hemingway’s works that self-consciously aspire to "story" status as his "experimental" works. Conveniently, in terms of critical reputation, these have tended to be the most highly regarded of Hemingway’s writings.

Lionel Trilling, for example, differentiated the works of the self-conscious, naïve, political “man,” who has a “dull personal ax to grind” and “fumbles at communication and falsifies,” from conscious, innocent, disinterested, and apolitical “artist,” who has a “perfect medium and tells the truth, even if it is only his truth.” Thus, Trilling singles out Hemingway’s pre-World War II short stories and The Sun Also Rises as superior to the later travelogues and novels, such as The Green Hills of Africa, To Have and Have Not, and The Fifth Column (7). Similarly, the poet John Hollander asserts that short stories, especially those written before World War II, were Hemingway’s “major genre,” with the possible
exception of *The Sun Also Rises* (211). Since Hemingway’s death, literary critics have generally agreed that as Hemingway’s public persona grew in cultural magnitude, his ability to craft probing, stylistically daring works declined. In light of these evaluations, one can only feel sympathy for the countless numbers of Japanese high-school students who have been subjected to *The Old Man and the Sea*!

In terms of language teaching, Hemingway’s “stories” also have the virtue of being among his shortest. Various critics have conjectured that the “discipline” of his early work as a professional journalist trained him in writing stories that were not only short in length, but “pared-down” in terms of lexicon and syntax as well. In such early collections as *In Our Time* [1925] and *Men Without Women* [1927], written under the tutelage of Gertrude Stein, Hemingway experimented with a syntax so simplified that the English artist Wyndham Lewis, in his characteristically overwrought prose, referred to him as a “Dumb Ox:”

> The sort of First-person Singular that Hemingway invokes is a dull-witted, bovine, monosyllabic simpleton... of a few words and even fewer ideas. This lethargic and stuttering dummy he conducts, or pushes, from behind, through all the scenes that interest him. This burlesque First-person Singular behaves in them like a moronesque [sic] version of his brilliant author. He Steins [sic] up and down the world, with the big lusterless orbs of a Picasso doll-woman... It is in short, the very dummy that is required for the literary mannerism of Miss Stein! (29)

Another key semiotic analytical tool is the distinction between *diégésis* and *récit*. *Diegesis*, the relation of characters and events independent from the words of a text, makes it possible for a story to be retold in different words, languages, and even media, and is what allows readers to play a
Hemingway deliberately directed his pared-down writing style at enabling this sort of active reading process, or as he phrased it, “I have tried to eliminate everything unnecessary to conveying experience to the reader so that after he or she has read something it will become a part of his or her experience and seem actually to have happened.”

At the same time, however, Hemingway also placed a strong emphasis on the precise words of his narratives or récit. An insistence on the untranslatability of “the words,” of a text is more characteristic of poetry than narrative. Hemingway himself felt the tension between these two modes of writing, once referring to his writing practice as “poetry written into prose.” Indeed, Harold Bloom makes the case that Hemingway ought to be considered a poet, rather than a novelist, asserting that “Hemingway is the only American writer of prose fiction who, as a stylist, rivals the principal poets: Stevens, Eliot, Frost, Hart Crane, aspects of Pound, W.C. Williams, Robert Penn Warren and Elizabeth Bishop” (2), and that “much that has been harshly criticized in Hemingway... results from his difficulty in adjusting his gifts to the demands of the novel” (3-4). No less a poet than Stevens himself called Hemingway “the most significant of living poets, so far as the subject of extraordinary reality is concerned.”

Thus, the extreme lexical control that Hemingway exerts over his experimental works, while creating a diegetic space that calls upon the reader to bring a “personal response from their own experience” to their reading, also has the effect of giving greater emphasis to individual lexical items.

Gerry Brenner identifies three “epistemic formulas” that Hemingway resorted to throughout his fiction-writing career that hinge around the meanings of these singled-out words and phrases. Many of the Nick Adams stories, for example, employ the formula of “textual perplexity,” in which the protagonist is often overwhelmed by a circumstance that he, but not the reader, is not capable of understanding. Stories characterized by
“extratextual reversal,” such as “Fifty Grand,” “After the Storm,” and “My Old Man,” the reader’s expectations about a certain character based on previously-held (“extratextual”) stereotypes are suddenly, and dramatically subverted. Finally, writing in reference to such stories as “Hills Like White Elephants,” “The Sea Change,” and “A Simple Enquiry,” he discusses Hemingway’s omission of single words in terms of a structure that he calls the “lexical riddle,” in which a story “pivot[s] upon a lexical crux, the unarticulated or ambiguous words abortion, lesbian, and corrupt” (161). Brenner asserts that these “formulas” enabled Hemingway to “exercise” private confusions arising from the unconventional nature of his early upbringing (156). More recently, Carl P. Eby has argued that the omissions in Hemingway’s works are a form of “secret sharing,” a type of erotic exchange that brings his “ideal reader into an unusually intimate relation with the text and its implied reader”(23-24). This characteristic component of Hemingway’s style makes certain of his works especially effective in language teaching because it not only goads readers into playing an active role, but also provides them with clues as to whether they have “got it right.”

II. Reading “Hills Like White Elephants”

When John Hollander described the “pregnant parataxis,” or coordination through juxtaposition, of Hemingway’s most “poetic” writing (214), he was thinking primarily of the italicized vignettes inserted between the short stories of In Our Time. However, the later story, “Hills Like White Elephants,” first published in Men Without Women, in which an American couple (“Jig” and alternately, “the man” or “the American”) debate the necessity of an abortion while waiting for a train to Madrid, is undoubtedly the most “paratactic” of Hemingway’s stories. Neither the arguing couple nor the third-person, objective narrator explicitly uses the word “abortion”: 
the missing word is, rather, evoked in the juxtaposition of the story’s two main elements: the dialogue of the main characters and the symbolic landscape referred to in the title.

At first, the story appears to be one long conversation. Hollander’s insight that the story’s paratactic structure, in which passages of landscape description relate to turns in the conversation, is complemented by the fact that upon further inspection, the story can be further subdivided into dramatic “beats,” each signaled by the direction of the reader’s attention to the bead curtain that hangs next to the table where the two main characters sit. Finally, despite its “conversational” structure, “Hills” is framed as histoire, told in the past tense, using a third-person, partly-omniscient narrator.

However, in a sense, the dialogue, with its complex linguistic and psychological manipulations, is the story here, and although numerous critics have pointed out that the story’s setting, a train station situated “between two rail lines,” the landscape on one side of which is “brown and dry,” which contrasts with the “fields of grain and trees” on the other side, provides an explicit hint, even as accomplished a reader as Virginia Woolf clearly was not able to understand what the story was about. In her review of Men Without Women, she complained that Hemingway, “keeps us under the fire of dialogue constantly, his people, half the time, are only saying what the author could say much more economically for them,” until “[a]t last we are inclined to cry out with the little girl in ‘Hills Like White Elephants,’ ‘Would you please please please please please please please please stop talking’” (53-54). The fact that Woolf misread Jig to be “a little girl” suggests, as Hollander remarks, that she “thinks the operation in question is a tonsillectomy” (216).

Only approximately one half of one percent of the words in the story is rated as college level and above by the Taishukan Genius English-Japanese Dictionary. Another extremely small number of words is what I will refer to
as “cultural words,” such as names of alcoholic beverages (“Anis del Toro”), names of foreign currency (“reales”), other foreign words and phrases (“dos cervesas”) and place names (Ebro, Barcelona, Madrid). The latter would also presumably present difficulties with range of reference for Hemingway's native English-speaking readers as well if not for the fact that they are, for the most part, used in such a way as their meaning can be derived from context. The remainder of the words in the story is rated at high-school level or below.

The extreme lexical control that Hemingway exerts over this story, while creating a diegetic space that requires and actively invites the reader's participation, also, at the same time has the effect of giving greater emphasis to those lexical items which fall outside of the realm of commonplace language. In the case of “Hills Like White Elephants,” for example, the terms, “white elephant,” “absinthe,” and finally, but more problematically, “abortion,” invite active readers to concentrate their search for meaning in these few key terms.

For instance, the cause of the man’s anger in the early part of the dialogue (for those students who catch it) is puzzling to the students because it hinges around the word, “absinthe,” which is lexically and referentially obscure (with the one exception of one student whom I taught several years ago who was taking classes in nineteenth-century French poetry.) Although the drink’s connotations with sterility, insanity and death caused it to be, by the 1920s, “forbidden” in the United States and all European countries except Spain, Barnaby Conrad points out that absinthe’s active ingredient, thujone, is contained in several other commonly available alcoholic drinks and has never been scientifically proven to possess the powerful narcotic and aphrodisiac qualities ascribed to it. Thus, in expressing her disappointment with absinthe, Jig is indicating her disillusionment with all efforts to find in Europe new levels of experience which presumably are unavailable in their American homeland, reducing their grand adventure to
a process of “look[ing] at things” and “try[ing] new drinks” (212).

In teaching the story, I usually begin class by handing one of the better English-English dictionaries (as opposed to a “learner’s dictionary”) to a student, and asking him or her to look up the phrase, “white elephant” of the title. *The American Heritage Dictionary*, for example, yields, “the rare whitish or light gray form of the Asian elephant, often regarded with special veneration in regions of SE Asia... a rare and expensive possession that is financially a burden to maintain... something of dubious or limited value... an article, ornament or household utensil no longer wanted by its owner... “ The *Oxford Concise Dictionary* adds that the kings of Siam gave such animals to courtiers whom they disliked in order to ruin them with the expense of keeping them. After writing these different meanings clustering around the idea of “sacred” and “burdensome,” on the blackboard, I ask the students to hold these two sets of meanings in their minds as they read the dialogue.

Much of the critical discussion concerning the “pace and desperate energy” (Lynn, 408) of the dialogue between the American and Jig concerns whether the conversation is, in the words of Paul Smith, “inhibited by a private language that they share,” or “reveal[s] two languages that reveal their irreconcilable differences” (209). Early critical accounts tended to focus on the former, seeing the stilted nature of the conversation as due to the fact that the couple’s orate conversational style, which has evolved to involve a high degree of conversational co-operation, is unsuited for the wrenching discussion in which they are involved, or as Richard W. Lid phrases it, “their “private language of love has become unbearable” ([1962] 401-2). The latter view, which has been more prevalent in recent years, is that “Hills” is a “classic, understated story about the failure of communication between the sexes” (Mellow, 348).

In her article, “Gender-Linked Miscommunication in ‘Hills Like White Elephants,’” Pamela Smiley applies Robin Lakoff’s early paradigm
characterizing “feminine speech” as more emotional, imprecise, and relationship-oriented than “male language,” which is unemotional, precise, concerned with facts, and goal oriented, in order to identify a series of gendered rhetorical strategies in the dialogue. Smiley’s reading is a useful way to go through the dialogue with the students, as many of them are not familiar with the stereotyped words and grammatical structures characteristic of “men’s” and “women’s” speech in English, or even aware of the fact that gendered speech is also a characteristic of English.

In the first “beat” of the dialogue, in which Jig introduces the simile of the distant hills looking like white elephants, her aim is, according to Smiley, to “establish intimacy through shared emotions and joke telling.” However, when the man, whose goal is to convince Jig to go through with the abortion, refuses to join her in this fancy, countering with the rational statement, “I’ve never seen one,” the effect being the same as the act of refusing to laugh at someone’s joke: a “strong form of distancing and power” (290).

The second beat of the conversation, signaled by the phrase, Jig “looked at the bead curtain” (“Hills,” 211), has Jig using what Lakoff calls “classic female deference” (Lakoff, qtd. in Smiley, 290) to draw the man out, asking him to translate the drink advertisement printed there and asking permission to try it. Once again, as Smiley points out, the American rebuffs her, refusing to make “even the most trivial personal disclosure - whether Anis del Toro tastes good with water” (291).

After the drink has been sampled, the hostility that has been simmering below the surface of the dialogue suddenly breaks out: the girl’s pronouncement that the anis “tastes like liquorice... everything tastes like liquorice. Especially all the things you’ve waited so long for, like absinthe”(212) prompts the man to snap, “Oh, cut it out,” a phrase whose belligerent nuance the students are probably not able to sense without referring to the Japanese translation. Jig’s response, “you started it,” is
almost impossible for the students to understand even with the aid of a dictionary, although it is a phrase that is undoubtedly familiar to all native speakers of English over the age of three, particularly those with siblings close in age. This is an instance where the meaning of a phrase must be learned in context, dramatized, ideally, or there is a good chance that the majority will miss the fact that hostility has been openly expressed, especially since Jig’s ensuing series of “feminine” tag questions: “wasn’t that bright?” “Isn’t it” succeeds in drawing the man out and dampening the conflict.

In the third beat of the conversation, signaled by the phrase, “the warm wind blew the bead curtain,” the man, mollified by their agreement on the subject of the beer they have just ordered, which the man describes with the “neutral adjectives” “nice and cool,” while Jig employs the “empty adjective” “lovely” (Smiley 293), broaches the source of the conflict:

“It’s really and awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said. “It’s not really an operation at all.”

The girl looked at the ground the table legs rested on.

“I know you wouldn't mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.”

The girl did not say anything. (212)

At this point it is necessary to stop and pose this additional riddle to the students: What is an operation, and when is an operation “not really an operation?” The answer: when it does not involve an incision or stitches. Apparently Tony Richardson, in his film adaptation of the story, felt that this line was too obscure, so he has the “Jig” character utter an additional line of dialogue: “they stick a knife in you. That’s what I would call an operation.” Although this is the most explicit reference to abortion in the story, in my experience, the majority of students will still not be ready to
venture an answer. However, I withhold telling the class the “answer” until the entire story has been read together.

In the fourth and penultimate “beat,” beginning with, “the girl looked at the bead curtain, put her hand out and took hold of two of the strings of beads” (213), the couple reveals themselves to be trapped in what Deborah Tannen describes as a “conversational double bind”: the man’s objectives are to “maintain camaraderie, avoid imposing, and give (or at least appear to give) the other person a choice in the matter” (Tannen, qtd. in Smiley 295). Thus, as Smiley observes, the man repeats the phrase “I don’t want you to [do anything you don’t want to]” six times in a forty-minute conversation. However, the man’s other objective is to persuade Jig to have the abortion, and, as Smiley notes, “it’s impossible to maintain easy camaraderie while insisting on the abortion” (295). Jig is also caught in a double bind because she wants both the man and the unborn child. Even after agreeing to the procedure (“I’ll do it, because I don’t care about me” (213)), she makes one last impassioned plea:

The girl stood up and walked to the end of the station. Across, on the other side, were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees.

“And we could have all this,” she said. “And we could have everything and every day we make it more impossible.” (213)

Smiley observes that feminine language, with its focus on facilitating social relationships, emphasizes politeness, which in turn, tends toward metaphors and indirect sentence patterns. Thus, what to Hollander is a paratactic juxtaposition of dialogue and landscape – Jig’s reference to the unborn baby as “all this”: the fertile landscape on the far side of the tracks
as opposed to the brown dry sterility on the side of the tracks leading to
Madrid – is to Smiley a gendered linguistic construction.

According to Smiley, the American’s uncomprehending response to Jig’s
impassioned speech, “what did you say?” (213), is the real turning point of
the story. As Smiley writes, Jig “has used a variety of language skills in her
confrontation with the American: she has been metaphorical, amusing, self-
sacrificing, sarcastic, direct - and none has worked. No matter which tack
she chooses, the American comes back with the same two sentences: ‘I
think you should do it’ and ‘I don’t want you to do anything you don’t want
to do.’” Thus, Smiley concludes, “even though traditional female language
is generally more skilful than traditional male language, because his is more
authoritative and powerful, the male’s best effects submission. Since our
society values authority and power, the inevitable result of the American’s
repetition is Jig’s silent smile” (297-98).

While it is useful and constructive to devote class time to this point
because students are often not aware that gendered language is very much in
existence in English just as it is in Japanese, in order to make this argument,
Smiley must accept Tannen’s premise that men and women in fact
constitute separate “cultures,” and that one form of language is inherently
capable of dominating another. However, there is one important linguistic
trait that Jig and the American have in common: their mutual refusal to
speak the word “abortion.” In fact, the American’s references to the
procedure as “not really an operation at all” and “just to let the air in,”
display all of the metaphorical indirection of so-called “feminine speech.”

What could be the possible reasons for this crucial omission? Many
critics have cited it as an example of Hemingway’s well-known “iceberg
theory” of writing, which has appeared in many forms and many guises
throughout his career: for example, the characters Jake Barnes and Brett
Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises* are united by their shared feeling that “you’ll
lose it if you talk about it” (217). Hemingway later articulated this
sentiment into a full-blown theory of writing in *Death in the Afternoon*:

If a writer knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing. (192)

In this context, Jig’s response to the American’s characterization of abortion as an action “just to let the air in” - her silence - is telling. The stoic reticence that is a highly-valued part of the Hemingway “code” as the hallmark of personal and artistic integrity, can also act negatively, as a barrier to positive change because, as Foucault argues in *The History of Sexuality*, discourse “transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes [power], renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (101). Jig’s refusal, or inability, to challenge the man’s euphemistic characterization of her situation with an explicit counter-description guarantees that she remains entrapped in a system of power relations in which the American man must always win.

As Kenneth G. Johnston writes, Jig’s “instincts tell her that their relationship will be radically altered, perhaps destroyed, if she goes through with the abortion. But if she refuses, she knows full well that he will leave her” (128). In the dilemma of having to choose between the man and her unborn child, Jig does not seem to even consider the option of unwed motherhood. Although American sexual mores had changed enough that by the time Hemingway wrote the story it was becoming permissible for an unmarried upper middle-class couple to travel to Europe together, the stigma of unwed motherhood was so great that in 1927 births to unwed
mothers stood at 2.7% of all births to American mothers, in spite of the fact that abortion and contraception were illegal and for the most part unavailable.

Thus, since without the American’s cooperation it is virtually impossible for her to have the baby, Jig is simply gambling that in agreeing to the abortion she can salvage her relationship with the American. Whether or not her gamble pays off, and the abortion does restore the relationship, the fact remains that Jig’s inability to persuade him to marry her results in the death of the unborn child, which is why Dorothy Parker, in her review of the story, praised it as “delicate and tragic” (Hollander 213).

“Hills Like White Elephants” ends with a final riddle. After the American returns to where Jig is sitting after having a solitary drink at the station bar (an act that many critics interpret as foreshadowing a multitude of other acts the American will perform without Jig, in the future), he asks her, “[d]o you feel better?” (214), the implication being that unlike the people inside, who are (in the story’s single lapse into omniscient narration) waiting “reasonably” for the train, Jig has been hysterical and out of control. Jig’s reply, “there’s nothing wrong with me. I feel fine” (Ibid.), poses the question: when is a woman well and unwell at the same time? Jig’s assertion of “feeling fine” is a rejection of both the implications of her passionate outburst as hysteria and of pregnancy as a disease.

While, even after this series of puzzles and hints some students (who, presumably cannot be expected to be more competent readers than Virginia Woolf) persist in not being able to guess the key word, “abortion,” once the entire class has been brought up to speed, the students are generally eager to go back and read the story again supplying the cultural information that leads up to the solution of the “puzzle.” Even after ten years of teaching Hemingway to Japanese college students, I never fail to be impressed by the extraordinary discernment and sensitivity that the students show in their term papers on this particular story, all the more so for my not having
dictated my interpretations or critical preoccupations to them.

III. Conclusion

Over the years, I have tried the following activities to further bridge the cultural gap between the students and the text. One idea is to have the students do research and discuss or write about differing attitudes toward abortion and unwed motherhood in the United States in the 1920s and the present. As we have seen, throughout his writing career Hemingway was excessively fond of riddles, unarticulated or ambiguous words, and “secrets.” Historically speaking, however, as an American writer, Hemingway would have had other, less obscure reasons for wanting to avoid the word “abortion” in particular. The Comstock Act of 1873, which criminalized the publication, distribution, and possession of information, devices, or medications for “unlawful” abortion or contraception was still in full force in 1927. Violators could be fined five thousand dollars and sentenced to five years of hard labor. The power of the law did not begin to erode until 1936, when it was reinterpreted to allow physicians to import and prescribe contraceptive devices “for the purpose of saving life and promoting the well being of patients,” and indeed, the section of the law relating to abortion has never been legally nullified, as the controversy surrounding the proposed Communications Decency Act in 1996 has shown. Remnants of the Comstock Act remain even today in the “gag order” that forbids physicians practicing in federally funded clinics to discuss abortion with their patients. Having the students do research and write reports (or for advanced-level students, give presentations to the class) gives them insight into this peculiarity of American culture and at the same time provides an opportunity to reflect upon what is a very common but still a taboo subject in everyday Japanese life.

In addition, following Duff and Maley (93-94) and Whiteson (106-108), I
have had groups of students adapt different sections of the story into screenplay form, complete with stage directions and camera angles. Since the major portion of the story is written in the form of dialogue, it is relatively easy for the students to convert it into dramatic form. In doing so, it is necessary for them to come to a clear understanding of the verbal and nonverbal meanings conveyed in each conversational exchange. Once they have mastered the technique using this story, they are able to move on to other, less directly adaptable short stories. While the previous two activities can be given as homework or term paper assignments, this last activity works best as a group assignment done during class time, with the class being presented with a copy of their combined efforts formatted into a screenplay of the entire story on the last day that the story is being studied.

In my experience, although some students are initially hesitant to engage in such an unaccustomed activity, they are usually drawn in by the enthusiasm of other students in the class. Their lively discussions are in Japanese, but what is most important is that they are actively engaged with the words of the text, negotiating with each other about the meaning that is created “between the lines.” Once they have understood the instructions, and perhaps most importantly, have gotten over the fact that the answer to the question is not written anywhere on the page, most students seem to have no trouble doing a good job on the assignment and many have even approached me outside of class asking for more of this kind of activity.

After the entire screenplay has been compiled, if the chemistry of the class is right, it is interesting to have the students act it out, with the instructor “casting” appropriate actors and coaching them in regard to appropriate ways to perform the dialogue. In taking upon themselves the words of the play, the students are not only demonstrating linguistic competence, but also actively engaging in a process of empathizing with fellow human beings who are the products of a very different worldview, which can be said to be the ultimate in active reading.
All of these activities are aimed at diminishing the students’ feeling of “otherness” when faced with a text written in English, by treating the text as a framework that must be supplemented with the students’ own ideas, knowledge, and emotional involvement. Authorial intention is not explicitly a concern, since, once the “riddle” has been guessed, readers and author share a common understanding, which then can serve as the basis for other readings of the text.

Notes

1 This paper is dedicated to my former student, Amano Taro. Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes [1994] assert that Hemingway’s published and unpublished writings, the “facts of his life,” and the “cultural objects we know [he] studied or encountered... extending to other cultural elements that throw light on Hemingway as a writer” must all be regarded as parts of the “Hemingway Text” (x-xii). Debra A. Moddelmog [1999] argues that the fact that the details of Hemingway’s life are a hotly contested site of personal, cultural and even commercial investment, a “biographical approach informed by certain poststructuralist precepts” is absolutely necessary for the furtherance of Hemingway studies (15).


3 Ernest Hemingway, quoted in Mary Hemingway, How It Was (New York: Knopf, 1976) 352, in Ernest Hemingway, Ernest Hemingway on Writing, 4.

4 Wallace Stevens [1942] quoted in Hollander, 212.

5 For details of Hemingway’s unconventional early upbringing, see Lynn.

6 The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition defines “parataxis” as “the coordination of grammatical elements such as phrases or clauses without the use of coordinating elements such as conjunctions.”

7 See also Hemingway’s interview with George Plimpton, in Bloom, 134, and A Moveable Feast, 75.
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要約

豊かなる並列 - ヘミングウェーの『白い象のような山』を教えること

スザンナ・バプロスカ

アーネスト・ヘミングウェイの作品のいくつかは中級レヴェルの英語能力をもつ日本の学生をアメリカ文学に導く上で特によく機能する。このことは、アメリカ文化におけるヘミングウェイの「神話的地位」によるばかりか、いくつかの言語的な要素にもよっている。明らかに、ヘミングウェイの作品の多くにみられる統制された統語法や語彙は、低位の中級レヴェルの英語能力をもつ学生にもそれらの作品を元の平易化されない形で読むことを可能にする。もちろん、ヘミングウェイの故意に意図された言語的な平易さは英語圏以外の読者に利することをねらって使われている文体的な戦術ではなくて、むしろ、テキストを語や句ごとに「解読する」代わりに、読者が積極的に自らを「行と行の間に」入れ込んで物語を統一的なものにするることを要求する全体的な創作実践の一部なのである。特に、批評家たちが「認識論的なぞ」や「語彙的なぞ」や「秘密の共有」といったように呼んできたものを含むヘミングウェイの作品は、この目的にとって理想的なものである、というのは、「なぞ」に対する答えが、読み取りや問いかけの積極的な実践を通じて、いったん推論されたときには、学生は物語に再び立ち戻って物語のジャンルのディスコース的構造によって意味がいかに可能にされたり制限されたりしているかを決定することができるからである。この過程は、当然のことながら十分には知りえない作者の意図を解釈しようとする試みは異なっている。この論文では、まさにこの過程を、この種のヘミングウェイの作品のなかでも最適の例だと思われる短編『白い象のような山』に関して論じるものである。